

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. Claims 1-8, 10, 11, and 13-19 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 20-22 have been added. Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 9, 12, and 20-22 will be pending and under consideration.

Support for new claims 20 and 21 can be found in originally-filed claim 10, and support for new claim 22 can be found in originally filed claim 11. New claims 20-22 represent the subject matter of cancelled claims 10 and 11 written in independent form.

The claim amendments do not introduce new matter. Applicants therefore respectfully request the entry and consideration of these amendments before examination of this application.

The Requirement for Restriction

In the Official Action, the Examiner has required restriction of the pending claims to one of the following three groups:

Group I: Claims 1-4 and 13-19, drawn to an anti-allergic agent comprising lactic bacteria;

Group II Claims 5-8, drawn to a method of making a medicament for reducing allergy by using lactic acid bacteria; and

Group III Claims 9-12, drawn to a method for reducing allergy by administering lactic acid bacteria.

Applicants hereby elect to prosecute invention **Group III**, directed to a method for reducing allergy by administering lactic acid bacteria. Claims 20-22 recite the subject matter of cancelled claims 10 and 11, which the Examiner included in Group III, in independent form. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that new claims 20-22 be included with Group III claims

and considered accordingly. Finally, Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications for the cancelled subject matter at any time before the issuance of a patent in this application.

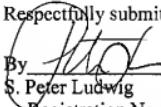
CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining that the Examiner believes can be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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